

Greek Magnates in Venetian Cyprus: The Case of the Synglitico Family

BENJAMIN ARBEL

Scholars who have been studying the history of the Venetian domination of Greek Lands have indicated a significant turning point in the relationship between the Serenissima and her Greek Orthodox subjects, which took place sometime between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Faced with the threat of Ottoman attacks, Venice is said to have developed a more lenient policy toward her Greek Orthodox subjects, and the latter on their part often developed a rather favorable attitude toward the dominating republic. Venetian Crete, in particular, has been singled out as the primary terrain for the development of these tendencies.¹ The Venetian domination of Cyprus corresponds chronologically to the above-mentioned change. Moreover, Cyprus was no less and probably even more exposed to the Ottoman threat than Crete. Nevertheless, the same logic has not been applied to the Venetian domination of Cyprus by writers dealing with this subject. On the contrary, the Venetian rule of the island has often been described in rather gloomy colors. A black legend emerges from different writings on the century of Venetian rule in Cyprus, not on the basis of any systematic study, but rather as a result of preconceptions, misunderstandings, or insufficient acquaintance with the huge amount of available sources. *Inter alia*, the relations between Venice and different social groups, such as the Cypriot peasantry or the nobility, have been characterized as truly antagonistic; emphasis has been given to the alleged sufferings of the Greek Cypriots under the hardships of Venetian rule, and it has also been claimed that Venice was highly suspicious of the insular nobility, which, on its part, is claimed to have been hostile toward the republic.²

¹F. Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au Moyen Age: le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien (XIIIe-XVe siècles)*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1975), 444; N. M. Panagiotakes, "Ο ποιητής του "Ερωτοκρίτου"" in his *Ο ποιητής του "Ερωτοκρίτου" καὶ ἄλλα βενετοκρητικά μελετήματα* (Herakleion, 1989), 260–62; Ch. A. Maltezos, "The Historical and Social Context," in *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete*, ed. D. Holton (Cambridge, 1991), 29–30.

²E.g., R. Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1973; first published in 1936), 19; F. G. Maier, *Cyprus from Earliest Time to the Present Day* (London, 1968; first published in German in 1964), 101–12; D. Alastos, *Cyprus in History*, 2nd ed. (London, 1976), 225–59, esp. 233–34; W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, "Les *litterae hortatoriae* accordées par les papes en faveur de la redemption des Chypriotes captifs des Turcs (1570–79) d'après les fonds de l'Archivio Segreto Vaticano," *Κέντρον Ἐπιστημονικῶν Ἑρευνῶν. Ἐπετηρὶς* (hereafter *Ἐπετηρὶς*), XI (Nicosia, 1981–82), 42; idem, "Le déclin de la société franque de Chypre entre 1350 et 1450," *Κυπρ.Σπουδ.* 46 (1982), 78, 83; C. P. Kyrris, *History of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1985), 243–48.

In a few previous studies I have tried to repudiate different elements of this black legend, particularly with respect to the Cypriot peasantry and the nobility.³ Here I would like to carry my investigation a little further with regard to the latter group, focusing the inquiry on the noblemen of Greek descent through a case study of one Greek-Cypriot noble family.

The Greek-Cypriot noblemen have generally not been treated as a separate group by historians writing about Frankish and Venetian Cyprus. In several respects, such an attitude, even if not always conscious or intentional, is quite justified. This author believes that in general terms there were no significant differences between Venice's attitude toward Latin and Greek-Cypriot noblemen, nor was there any marked difference between the attitudes and the pattern of behavior of Greek-Cypriot noblemen which distinguished them in any significant manner from their Latin peers. Nevertheless, the small group of Greek noblemen, which constituted no more than about ten families,⁴ is worthy of some consideration. Firstly, because of its mere existence in a society originally based on separation between Latins and Greeks; since this reality was already a *fait accompli* when Venice took over the reins of government in Cyprus, it will not occupy us here.⁵ Secondly, and this is of special relevance to the period under examination, because the social and economic influence of the Greek-Cypriot noblemen seems to have exceeded their numerical weight. Thirdly, because, due to their overlapping identities, one social and one cultural, any issue which touches upon Venice's relationship with the Greek-Cypriots as a distinct cultural group or with the nobility as a whole would also concern this group. Considering the claims that Venice's relations with the nobility were essentially marked by mutual animosity, and that the Greek-Cypriots were the first victims of alleged Venetian extortions, an examination of the relationship which developed between Venice and the more prominent figures of her Greek-Cypriot subjects is of special relevance.

The present case study focuses on the history of the Synglitico (Syngritico) family.⁶ From relatively modest beginnings, members of the Synglitico family succeeded in acquiring noble status sometime during the fourteenth or fifteenth century. It was, however, the period of Venetian domination which opened before them the road to great fortunes. It will be argued that their spectacular success was not the result of exclusive privileges acquired by one family, but rather emphasizes the opportunities which Venetian rule offered to the Cypriot nobility, including those few Greek families which had acquired noble status under the former regime.

The origins of the Synglitico family are not quite clear. It has been claimed that a few families of the Byzantine nobility, which had lost their noble status following the Frankish

³B. Arbel, "The Cypriot Nobility from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century: A New Interpretation," in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, ed. B. Arbel, B. Hamilton, and D. Jacoby (London, 1989), 175–97, also published in *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4 (1989), 175–97; idem, "Résistance ou collaboration? Les Chypriotes sous la domination vénitienne," in *Etat et colonisation au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*, ed. M. Balard (Lyon, 1989), 131–37.

⁴Arbel, "The Cypriot Nobility," 187.

⁵For the integration of Greeks into the Frankish nobility, see *ibid.*, 175–97.

⁶The name appears in the sources in different variations, and it will here be generally used in its most common form, Synglitico. Christian and family names, as well as toponyms of Cypriot villages, are mentioned in this article in the italianized form, as they generally appear in the Venetian sources.

conquest of Cyprus in 1197, fought their way up again and succeeded at some stage in regaining recognition as noblemen.⁷ But there is no evidence to link the Synglitico family to a similar process. The name Synglitikos, or Syngritikos (the *l* and *r* are often interchanged in the documents mentioning this family's name), might indicate that it was one of those Greek and Syrian families which had traditionally staffed the royal chancery or *syngriton* (σύνγκριτον), a Cypriot term equivalent to the Byzantine *sekretion* (σέκρετον).⁸ Service in various departments of the royal bureaucracy could constitute a steppingstone for social ascendancy under the Lusignan regime, as it later did under Venice. This hypothesis receives further support if we identify *kyrios Kōnstantinos o sekretikos* (κύριος Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ σεκρετικὸς), mentioned in an obituary note, dated 5 April 1261, as a member of the same family—the earliest that has been traced until now.⁹ A *Dominus Constancius Singriticus*, apparently not the same person, is mentioned in 1318 in the accounts of the village of Psimolofos as owner of a vineyard in the nearby village of Piscopio.¹⁰ Jean Richard described this person as a Cypriot nobleman of Greek origin,¹¹ but I am not totally convinced that the title *Dominus* is sufficient proof for legal noble status in this case.

Evidence about different members of the Synglitico family—physicians, priests, scribes, and courtiers—becomes more extensive from the end of the fourteenth century onwards.¹² In the 1460s, during the struggle over the crown between Jacques “the Bas-

⁷G. Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1940–52), II, 8; C. Mango, *Chypre carrefour du monde byzantin*, XVe Congrès international d'Etudes byzantines, Rapports et co-rapports (Athens, 1976), 9 and n. 28.

⁸L. Makhairas, *Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus, Entitled “Chronicle,”* ed. R. M. Dawkins, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1932), chaps. 14, 157, 158, 311. See also Dawkins' notes in his glossary: *ibid.*, II, 269. It has also been suggested that the name Synglitico signifies senatorial rank: D. V. Vayacacos, “Noms de famille néo-grecs derivants de mots à signification de grades, titres et offices militaires et administratifs,” *Actes du premier Congrès international des Etudes balkaniques et sud-est européennes*, VI (Sofia, 1968), 562.

⁹J. Darrouzès, “Les manuscrits originaux de Chypre de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris,” *REB* 8 (1950), 170; R. Devreesse, *Le fonds Coislin* (Paris, 1945), 189; cf. also Νέος Ἑλλ. 15 (1921), 156–58, and *PLP* 6 (Vienna, 1983), 113.

¹⁰J. Richard, “Le casal de Psimolofos et la vie rurale en Chypre au XIVe siècle,” *MélRome* 59 (1947), 151, repr. in *Les relations entre l'Orient et l'Occident au Moyen Age* (London, 1977), art. IV.

¹¹Richard, “Le casal de Psimolofos,” 129.

¹²The name of σὺν Τζορτζοῦ ὁ Σηγκριτικὸς is noted on the margins of a Greek liturgical manuscript under the year 1397: J. Darrouzès, “Un obituaire chypriote: le parisinus graecus 1588,” *Κυπρ.Σπουδ.* 15 (1951), 40. A certain George Sekretikos (the same person?), described as γραμματικὸς of the king of Cyprus, appears as a possessor of another Greek manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Nationale: Darrouzès, “Les manuscrits originaux de Chypre,” 180. A σὺν Νικόλαος Σηγκριτικὸς is mentioned in a donation registered in the margins of a liturgical manuscript in 1398: J. Darrouzès, “Notes pour servir à l'histoire de Chypre (troisième article),” *Κυπρ.Σπουδ.* 22 (1958), 238. Gioan Synglitico was a physician in the entourage of King Janus in the 1420s: F. Bustron, “Historia overo commentarii de Cipro,” ed. L. de Mas Latrie, *Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France: Mélanges historiques* (hereafter *MH*), V (Paris, 1886), 360; Makhairas, *Recital*, chap. 665 (Τζουὰν Σύνγκριτικὸς); Darrouzès, “Les manuscrits originaux de Chypre,” 186. The name of Jacopo Synglitico (son of the above-mentioned Gioan), a medical doctor who graduated from the University of Padua, appears (in the distorted form of “Sanchituto”) in a Genoese report of 1455 as one of Queen Hellen's advisers: W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, “Etude de prosopographie généalogique des Chypriotes mentionnés dans les registres du Vatican, 1378–1471,” in *Μελέται καὶ Ὑπομνήματα* 1 (Nicosia, 1984), 667; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, III, 527, n. 2. Μιχαὴλ Σηγκριτικὸς was a Nicosiote priest possessing a Greek manuscript purchased in 1454: J. Darrouzès, “Notes pour servir à l'histoire de Chypre (quatrième article),” *Κυπρ.Σπουδ.* 23 (1959), 35. Nicolaus Synglitico was *scribarius* of the bishopric of Paphos until his death in 1470 or shortly before that date: Rudt de Collenberg, “Etude de prosopographie,” 667.

tard” and his sister Charlotte de Lusignan, a few persons bearing this name appear in the camps of both contenders.¹³ Some of them at least must have attained the status of nobility before the Venetian takeover of 1473. For example, Philippo (Philippe) Synglitico (Syngliticos, Singritico) served as captain of the fortress of Sivouri in the Messaoria in 1468–69.¹⁴ The holding of such an office, combined with landholding (though it is not certain whether his village of Terra was a feudal estate) implies noble status.¹⁵ His marriage to the noblewoman Marie Boussat¹⁶ is also significant in this respect, because Cypriot noblemen tended to contract marriages within the boundaries of their own social group.¹⁷ At the beginning of Venetian rule, different members of the Synglitico family were already considered noblemen, were connected by matrimonial alliances with other families of the Cypriot nobility, held public offices, and possessed landed estates. This was the basis of their rise to the apex of Cypriot colonial society under the rule of Venice.

The first prominent member of the Synglitico family to appear in sources of the Venetian period is Nicolo Syngritico, mentioned as governor of Limassol in 1505.¹⁸ Four years later we encounter him in Venice, seeking another governorship in Cyprus. He is then described as “nobile ciprioto.”¹⁹ The fact that he was able to invest on this occasion 1,000 ducats in Venice’s public debt (*monte nuovo*) indicates that he was quite well-to-do.²⁰ In 1512, Nicolo asked to be nominated again as governor of Limassol. He did not even try to conceal the fact that he was not going to exercise the office personally, but intended to send a deputy, who would receive part of the 70 ducats which constituted the salary of the office. His main motivation for seeking the office (which was granted to him)

¹³A certain Antonio Synglitico is mentioned as one of Charlotte’s followers who escaped from Kerynia in 1461 in order to join Jacques: G. Boustronios, *The Chronicle, 1456–1489*, ed. R. M. Dawkins (Melbourne, 1964), chap. 69, and Bustron, “Historia,” 402. He can probably be identified with Αντώνιος Συγκριτικός, who, according to Darrouzès, copied in 1469 the manuscript of the Assizes (Ms. Paris. 1390), later published by Sathas: Darrouzès, “Les manuscrits originaux de Chypre,” 187. Sathas, however, read the copyist’s name as Νικόλαος Συγκριτικός: C. N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, VI (Venice-Paris, 1877), 497. Thomasino Syngritico appears in 1463 and again in 1474 in safe-conducts granted by the Master of the Order of Rhodes to supporters of Queen Charlotte: L. de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l’île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan* (hereafter *Histoire*), III (Paris, 1855), 127 and n. 3. Helena Synglitico is mentioned in 1467 in Charlotte’s suite: Rudt de Collenberg, “Etude de prosopographie,” 667. Gioan Synglitico received a landed estate from King Jacques in 1468: Bustron, “Historia,” 424; Nicolo Synglitico served in 1468 as secretary of the royal *secrète* under King Jacques II: Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 189, 191, 268; J. Richard, *Le livre des remembrances de la secrète du royaume de Chypre (1468–1469)* (Nicosia, 1983), nos. 14, 175, 221, 231.

¹⁴Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 243, 272–73; Richard, *Le livre des remembrances*, nos. 115, 133, 156.

¹⁵See Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 273, and Richard, *Le livre des remembrances*, no. 156.

¹⁶Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 281.

¹⁷Arbel, “The Cypriot Nobility,” 182. See also the marriage of Thomaso Synglitico to Margherita Mista-chiel, *ibid.*, 127 and note; L. de Mas Latrie, “Documents nouveaux servants de preuves à l’histoire de l’île de Chypre,” in *MH*, IV (Paris, 1882), 501–4.

¹⁸A. Ch. Aristeidou, “Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα της Κυπριακής ιστορίας από τὸ ἀρχεῖο τῆς Βενετίας, I (Nicosia, 1990), no. 100. Nicolo was probably the son of Thomas (Thomasino), mentioned above among Queen Charlotte’s supporters at Rhodes in the 1460s: see above, note 11, and Nicolo’s testament in Archivio di Stato, Venezia (hereafter ASV), Testamenti notarili, not. Girolamo Canal, busta 191, no. 573, and *ibid.*, Miscellanea Gregolin, busta 20 (24 Nov. 1531).

¹⁹ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci (hereafter X), Misti, filza 23, no. 71.

²⁰*Ibid.*, filza 29, no. 251. In a document which may be attributed to the second decade of the sixteenth century, his income is evaluated at 400 ducats, which seems a rather low estimate in comparison with his big expenses during that period: Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 499.

was the honor which it might confer upon him. The fact that he was already a rich man is further confirmed by his offer, on the same occasion, to lend the republic 1,000 ducats in order to persuade Venice to invest his brother Piero, who was still living on Rhodes, with a money-fief, which would enable him to return to his homeland (*repatriar*).²¹

In 1516, while still holding the governorship of Limassol, Nicolo purchased the Cypriot village of Anafotida for the considerable sum of 4,000 ducats.²² Four years later, he married his daughter Apolonia to the Venetian patrician Bartolomeo, son of Andrea Pesaro, and the above-mentioned village was granted to the bridegroom as a dowry.²³ The two families had already been joined in 1502 by the wedding of Nicolo's niece, daughter of his brother Zegno, to Andrea, son of Girolamo Pesaro,²⁴ an alliance which would be later strengthened by the wedding in 1522 of another niece, the daughter of his brother Piero, to Bartolomeo, son of Luca Pesaro.²⁵ These short glimpses of the family history already foreshadow the patterns which would be repeated by later generations: office holding, matrimonial alliances with Venetian families, investments in landed estates, and attachment to the Venetian regime. The latter aspect is also indicated by Nicolo's decision to spend his last years in Venice, where he dictated his testament in November 1531, and where he must have died shortly afterwards.²⁶

The career of Nicolo's brother, Zegno (Genio, Eugenios), shows that the opportunities opened to Cypriots of noble status during those years could serve toward the development of even greater fortunes and power. The beginnings of Zegno's ascent seem very similar to his brother's *modus operandi*. In 1510, he offered a loan amounting to 2,000 ducats in order to be nominated for two years as viscount of Nicosia, the most important office in the colony outside the Venetian magistracies, which was reserved for Cypriots of knightly status.²⁷ Five years later, Zegno was in Venice trying to acquire some Cypriot estates.²⁸ The viscounty seems to have brought him great satisfaction, for in 1515 he was ready to contribute an additional sum of 5,000 ducats in order to be nominated again to

²¹ ASV, X, Misti, filza 29, no. 251 (30 Aug. 1512). Nicolo proposed that the 1,000-ducat loan be repaid to him after his four-year term as captain, and that in case of a deferment of the repayment, he should continue to hold the office until fully satisfied. Pietro Synglitico (in the document cited below, Pero Syncritico) appears among the lay electors of the Greek bishop of Rhodes in September 1511 (see Z. N. Tsirpanlis, "Il decreto fiorentino di unione e la sua applicazione nell'arcipelago greco: Il caso di Creta e di Rodi," *Θησαυρίσματα* 21 [1991], 81). If we identify this person with Pietro Sangritico, who was one of the Rhodian representatives who negotiated Rhodes' surrender to the Ottomans in 1522 (*ibid.*, 63, n. 8), we may surmise that Nicolo's attempt to return his brother to Cyprus did not materialize in 1512.

²² ASV, X, Misti, reg. 39, fols. 205v–206, 207, 209v, 210v–211.

²³ See the marriage contract in ASV, Miscellanea atti diplomatici e privati, busta 52, no. 1697.

²⁴ M. A. Barbaro, *Arbori de' patritii veneti continuati da M. A. Tàsca*, ASV, Miscellanea codici, nos. 894–898, vol. 6, fol. 81.

²⁵ ASV, Avogaria di comun, reg. 108/1 (dated 19 May 1533).

²⁶ ASV, Archivio notarile, not. Girolamo Canal, testamenti, butsa 191, no. 573. In February 1530 he had received in Venice a grain shipment from Cyprus: ASV, X, Comuni, filza 12, no. 208.

²⁷ Ch. A. Maltezou, "Νέαι εἰδήσεις περί Εὐγενίου Συγκλητικοῦ ἐκ τῶν Κρατικῶν Ἀρχείων τῆς Βενετίας," *Πρακτικά τοῦ Πρώτου Διεθνoῦς Κυπρολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου* (Αευκωσία, 1969), I/A (Nicosia, 1973), 232 (6 Aug. 1510); for Zegno's petition, see ASV, X, Misti, filza 25, no. 219 (1510).

²⁸ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii*, ed. R. Fulin et al., 58 vols. (Venice, 1879–1903), XX, col. 67. See also the letter sent to him from Cyprus by his brother Nicolo: ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere di ambasciatori, rettori ed altre cariche (hereafter Capi X, Lettere), busta 288, no. 300 (6 March 1515).

the same office.²⁹ The opposition of other Cypriots to his practical appropriation of the office caused him to give it up, but he compensated himself by buying, during his stay in Venice in 1521 as envoy of Nicosia's community, the Cypriot village of Potamia for the price of more than 5,000 ducats.³⁰

An even greater success was probably the acquisition, on the same occasion, of the prestigious title of count of Roucha (Roccas), which had become vacant following the death of Count Morfo de Grinier (Grenier) in 1501, followed by that of his daughter Helena in 1503.³¹ It should be noted that after taking hold of Cyprus, Venice acquiesced to the conferment of two Cypriot baronial titles—Giorgio Contarini, a cousin of Caterina Cornaro, the Venetian queen of Cyprus (1473–89), was recognized as count of Jaffa, a title bestowed upon him by the queen in 1476;³² and Nicolo Giustinian became count of Carpas in 1511, following his marriage to Charlotte Perez Fabrice.³³ In both these cases the counts were Venetian patricians. But in 1521, for the first time, a baronial title was conferred by Venice on a Cypriot nobleman, and more interestingly, on a Greek-Cypriot nobleman. In his petition, Zegno Synglitico asked that the loan of 1,500 ducats, which tempted Venice to bestow this honor, should not be mentioned in the official document granting him the title, and the Council of Ten respected his request. Seven years later, he succeeded in transforming the grant into a hereditary title.³⁴

During the 1520s it was already quite clear that Zegno Synglitico was among the richest men in Cyprus, if not the richest. In 1525, during another stay in Venice, he disbursed 10,000 ducats in order to acquire the Cypriot village of Aradippou, in the district of Saline (Larnaca).³⁵ About three years later, he was able to pay 28,500 ducats for the big village of Morphou in northern Cyprus which, according to a contemporary writer, was among the twenty largest villages on the island.³⁶ A report of a Venetian governor from 1529 shows that Zegno's annual income constituted about 10 percent of the total income of Cypriots from landed estates.³⁷

²⁹ASV, X, Misti, reg. 38, fols. 121r–121v (1515). Zegno is described in this document as “cavalier et zentil-homo Cyprioto.”

³⁰On the renouncement of the viscounty, see ASV, X, Misti, reg. 44, fol. 64 (21 March 1521); *ibid.*, Senato Mar, reg. 19, fols. 186v–187v (May 1521); for the acquisition of Potamia, see ASV, X, Misti, filza 47, no. 198 and reg. 44, fol. 102v (7 Aug. 1521); Maltezoú, “Νέαι εἰδήσεις,” 233–34 (13 Aug. 1521). Although Potamia was acquired as an allodial possession, Zegno remained under the obligation to deliver wheat produced in this village to the state.

³¹Maltezoú, “Νέαι εἰδήσεις,” 235–36 (22–24 Aug. 1521). Zegno wrote in his petition that Helena had died eight years before, but she had actually died eighteen years before, i.e., in 1503: see ASV, Capi X, Lettere, busta 290, no. 65. Cf. C. du Fresne Du Cange, *Les familles d'Oltre-mer*, ed. E. G. Rey (Paris, 1869), 310–14, which contains many errors regarding the Synglitico family. The conferment of the title was also noted in Sanuto's diary: Sanuto, *I diarii*, XXXI, col. 289 (29 Aug. 1521).

³²L. de Mas Latrie, “Les comtes de Jaffa et d'Ascalon du XIIe au XIXe siècle,” *AVen* 18 (1879), 401; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, III, 703, 794.

³³L. de Mas Latrie, “Les comtes du Carpas,” *BEC* 41 (1880), 388–89.

³⁴ASV, X, Comuni, filza 7, no. 132; *ibid.*, reg. 4, fol. 39v (17 June 1528).

³⁵ASV, X, Misti, reg. 47, fols. 188v–189r, 192r.

³⁶ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 4, fols. 38v–39v (17 June 1528). Cf. E. de Lusignan, *Chorografia et breve historia universale dell'isola di Cipro* (Bologna, 1573), 19; *idem*, *Description de toute l'isle de Cypre* etc. (Paris, 1580), 36.

³⁷Sanuto, *I diarii*, LI, 443. The sum indicated under Zegno's name—12,000 ducats—seems low in comparison with his great financial capacities, which might signify that we are here dealing with a fiscal evaluation. If so, the relative weight of Zegno's incomes remains valid. The incomes of churchmen and of the two Venetian counts of Jaffa and Carpas have not been included in this calculation. The yearly income of 800

The acquisition of Aradippou and Morphou, although involving the investment of huge sums of money, was conditioned by feudal custom. Moreover, the Venetian Council of Ten reserved for itself the right to redeem Morphou after a period of five years. And indeed, a few years later, the republic made great efforts to cancel the sale of Aradippou and to redeem Morphou. When it became clear that this redemption could not be financed by the colony's revenues, Venice even reverted to money deposits in the Venetian mint in order to raise the necessary sum.³⁸ But Zegno was determined to keep both villages in his possession, and the issue was finally settled by a payment on his part of the legendary sum of 60,000 ducats, which enabled him to keep both villages in feudal tenure.³⁹ In the meantime Zegno also concluded a credit transaction with the republic by which he lent 20,000 ducats to the Signory for a period of twelve months.⁴⁰

In the year following the Aradippou and Morphou settlement, these enormous expenditures did not prevent Zegno from concluding, during another stay in Venice, a marriage agreement for his eleven-year-old granddaughter, Maria, who was destined to wed the Venetian patrician Francesco, son of Lorenzo Barbarigo; the affluent grandfather committed himself to pay as a dowry no less than 21,000 ducats.⁴¹ One should note that during the previous year, the Venetian Senate raised the upper limit of sums paid as dowries by Venetian citizens to 4,000 ducats.⁴² Synglitico, who was not considered a Venetian citizen, was apparently free to pay as much as he wished, and the dowry which he paid was five times greater than the legal maximum imposed on Venetians.

The origin of this great wealth is not quite clear. It is possible that Zegno had a special talent for business, successfully combining the holding of public offices, estate management, and international trade. The inclusion of Cyprus in the Venetian colonial empire opened new markets and new possibilities for enterprising spirits, and Zegno must have taken full advantage of these opportunities. In fact, Venice, which he visited several times, seems to have constituted an important base for his activities. We know that he held in lease estates belonging to Giorgio Corner, Queen Caterina's brother, who was reputed to be one of the richest men in Venice.⁴³ It could be that a great part of Zegno's

ducats, attributed to Zegno in the undated list in Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 499, might be the result of a copyist's error.

³⁸Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice (BNM), Ms. It. VII 1808 (8375), no. 8 (instruction to the Syndic Semitecolo to redeem Morphou, Feb. 1530); ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 6, fols. 121v–122r (12 Jan. 1531); *ibid.*, reg. 9, fols. 141r–142r (Morphou transferred to the possession of the Venetian mint, with authority to collect advance payments of lease in order to redeem the estate, 29 Dec. 1533); *ibid.*, fols. 155r–155v (decision to use deposits in the mint for the redemption of Morphou, 24 Jan. 1534); *ibid.*, reg. 10, fols. 55v, 65v–66r (decision to abolish the sale of Aradippou and to compensate Zegno Synglitico for his original investment, Sept. 1534).

³⁹ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 11, fols. 90v–91r (29 Jan. 1536).

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, reg. 10, fols. 6v–7r (16 March 1534).

⁴¹For the contract, dated 26 May 1536, see ASV, Avogaria di comun, reg. 143/4, fols. 68v–71v. An earlier contract to the same effect had been drawn in Nicosia by the father of the future bride, Zacho Synglitico (Zegno's son), on 24 February 1535, and it was registered in Venice on 26 May 1535: *ibid.*, reg. 108/1. In the latter register, the date of the first contract is mistakenly noted as having been signed in 1525. Cf. M. Barbaro, *Libro di nozze patrizie*, BNM, Ms. It. VII 156 (8492), fol. 49.

⁴²Barbaro, *Libro di nozze*, fol. Bv–Cv (29 April 1535).

⁴³Maltezou, "Νέαι εἰδήσεις," 237–38 (1536). On Giorgio Corner and his estates in Cyprus, see B. Arbel, "A Royal Family in Republican Venice: The Cypriot Legacy of the Corner della Regina," *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 15 (1988), 138–42; *idem*, "The Reign of Caterina Corner as a Family Affair," *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 26 (1993), 67–85.

fortune was the result of cotton production and exportation. Part of the sum which he pledged himself to pay for Morphou, about 5,000 ducats, was paid in cotton.⁴⁴ At any rate, transactions of this magnitude must have been based to a considerable extent on credit.

Zegno's heir to the title of count of Roucha was his eldest son, Zacho (Zacco, Jacopo, Giacomo), who, already in 1521, while accompanying his father on a mission to Venice, had been knighted by Doge Antonio Grimani.⁴⁵ Zacho followed his father's steps in combining the holding of public offices in Cyprus and investment in rural estates, to which we should add tax-farming. In 1536, his father still being alive, Zacho served as viscount of Nicosia.⁴⁶ Later he was one of the spokesmen (*procuratori*) of the Cypriot nobility, and envoy of the Nicosia community to Venice (January 1546).⁴⁷ In 1529, before inheriting his father's title, we encounter him, associated with Diego Gonem, in acquiring two Cypriot villages.⁴⁸ Tax-farming seems to have become a main investment of his in later years: he was associated with other people in farming the customs (*gabella e commercio*) of Famagusta in 1547, 1550, 1558, and 1559.⁴⁹

Riches were, of course, accompanied by honor and prestige. When the Venetian authorities established the formal order of precedence of the feudal arrays in Cyprus in 1544, Zacho Synglitico appeared in the third place, after the counts of Jaffa and Carpas, who were Venetian patricians, but preceding the count of Tripoli, of the old Frankish family De Nores. Apparently, there was no attempt to question this order of precedence.⁵⁰

Zacho's father, Zegno, had two sons, and probably also two daughters, but Zacho himself had to care for five sons and five daughters.⁵¹ Four of the latter were married to Cypriot noblemen, and one (Maria) to a Venetian patrician—Francesco, son of Lorenzo Barbarigo.⁵² Weighty dowries were expected of the opulent count, and five such marriages could involve great expenditure. Moreover, toward the end of his life, Zacho's involvement in tax-farming brought him considerable losses. Consequently, at his death in 1563, his debts to the state amounted to 25,000 ducats.⁵³

The last count of Roucha, Zacho's eldest son, Zegno (the second count bearing this name), exemplifies no less emphatically the possibilities which were open to Cypriot

⁴⁴ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 4, fols. 39v, 53 (17 June and 10 July 1528).

⁴⁵Sanuto, *I diarii*, XXXI, col. 41 (13 July 1521).

⁴⁶ASV, Avogaria di comun, reg. 143/4, fol. 70. Zacho is first mentioned as count of Roucha in a document dated 15 December 1539: ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 13, fol. 108.

⁴⁷ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 17, fol. 102v.

⁴⁸Ibid., filza 9, no. 12. The two villages were Schlinica and Gerovasa.

⁴⁹ASV, Capi X, Lettere, busta 289, no. 276a; *ibid.*, busta 290, nos. 13–14; ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 23, fol. 155; *ibid.*, filza 75, no. 16.

⁵⁰Mas Latrie, "Les comtes de Jaffa et d'Ascalon," 417.

⁵¹Zegno Synglitico's sons were Zacho and Marco, who are often mentioned in the archival documents. The two daughters are mentioned in Du Cange, *Les familles d'Outre-mer*, 313. They could probably be identified as Aurelia and Victoria, two nuns mentioned in Nicolo Synglitico's testament as his nieces. The same document mentions another niece, Catherina, also a nun (see above, note 26).

⁵²See above, note 41.

⁵³In the late 1550s he asked, on two occasions, to postpone his payments due for the farming of the customs of Famagusta: ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 23, fol. 155 (27 May 1558), and *ibid.*, reg. 24, fol. 42 (11 Sept. 1559). On the debt left by him to his heirs, see ASV, X, Comuni, filza 88 (his son's petition, 28 July 1563).

noblemen within the framework of the Venetian state, and the attachment of the Cypriot noblemen to Venice. Before succeeding his father, his annual income was evaluated at around 12,000 ducats.⁵⁴ Later, the villages of Morphou and Potamia, inherited from his father, constituted his main landed fortune.⁵⁵ By virtue of his marriage to Melisina Requesens, he also assumed the prestigious title of seneschal, and until his wife's death in 1562, her fiefs of Paleochori, Camenoprastio, and Melanissia were added to the family's estates.⁵⁶ Other estates were held in lease. The northern village of Cormachiti, for instance, was leased by Zegno until 1562, when it was transferred to the count's brother, Matteo, who later redeemed it and used it as dowry for his marriage.⁵⁷ Zegno also filled the office of viscount in 1551,⁵⁸ and served as an envoy of Nicosia's community (*università*) to Venice in 1562.⁵⁹ In the latter year, however, the wheel of fortune seemed to have turned against him. His wife Melisina died without leaving any offspring, and Venice refused to honor his request to leave Melisina's estates in his possession, claiming their restitution as feudal overlord.⁶⁰ In 1563, Zegno's father died, leaving great debts behind him. Venice was quite lenient toward Zegno, but the new count seems to have had some difficulty in honoring his father's obligations even under the easier terms which were granted to him.⁶¹

In 1564, Zegno was appointed *collateral general* of the Venetian armies in the *terraferma*, a high-ranking grade in the military administration of the Venetian land forces.⁶² It is not clear whether this assignment was part of Zegno's efforts to solve his financial problems, but it certainly reflects Zegno's personal capacities as well as the mutual faith which had developed between the Venetian authorities and this family. On the other hand, his new marriage, one year later, to Cara Bressa of Treviso, which brought him a dowry of 22,000 ducats, can also be considered as a successful business operation.⁶³

The mutual attachment between the Synglitico family and Venice is further attested during the last years of Venetian rule in Cyprus. In 1567, when the signs of Ottoman

⁵⁴This was the evaluation of Francesco Stella, a Venetian official on the island: ASV, Capi X, Lettere, busta 290, nos. 63–73. Zegno succeeded his father in 1563.

⁵⁵In April 1563, in order to make payments for the customs farming of Famagusta, Zegno borrowed 8,000 ducats in Venice from a Cypriot relative, Zuan Zamberlan; the debt was supposed to be repaid from the revenues of Morphou and Potamia: ASV, X, Comuni, filza 97 (1566).

⁵⁶The date of his first marriage is unknown, but on 30 October 1555 he is already described as "grand seneschal": ASV, Capi X, Lettere, busta 290, no. 46; see also ASV, X, Secreti, filza 10 (11 Aug. 1599); ASV, Dispacci al senato, filza 2 (20 Aug. 1562); ASV, XX Savi del corpo del senato, busta 24 (spazzi 1562–69), fol. 39 (confiscation of Melisina's three estates following her death in 1562 [16 July 1563]). See also J. Richard, "A propos d'un privilège de Jean II de Lusignan: une enquête sur les modalités de la mise en forme des actes royaux," *Δελτίον Ἑταιρείας Κυπριακῶν Εποικῶν* 50 (1986), 125–33.

⁵⁷ASV, X, Comuni, filza 97 (1566).

⁵⁸ASV, Senato Mar, filza 7 (his election on 14 January 1551); *ibid.*, reg. 31, fol. 112v (the Senate's confirmation of the election, 18 May 1551).

⁵⁹ASV, Dispacci al senato, filza 2 (20 Aug. 1562).

⁶⁰ASV, XX Savi del Corpo del Senato, busta 24 (spazzi, 1562–69), fol. 39 (16 July 1563).

⁶¹ASV, X, Comuni, filza 88 (28 July 1563); *ibid.*, filza 96 (Nov. 1565). See also Zegno's testament in Maltezou, "Νέαι εἰδήσεις," 239–44 (1570).

⁶²ASV, X, Comuni, reg. 26, fol. 131v (30 Aug. 1564). Du Cange claims that Zegno went to Venice after the deaths of his wife and son in order to be recognized as seneschal, but Venice refused and nominated him as *collateral* instead: see Du Cange, *Les familles d'Outre-mer*, 313. On the office of *collateral general*, see M. E. Mallett, *Mercenaries and Their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1974), 125–28.

⁶³See the marriage contract, dated 22 March 1565, in ASV, X, Comuni, filza 97 (1566).

bellicose intentions increased, Zegno returned to Cyprus in order to persuade the local noblemen to contribute money for the construction of new walls for Nicosia.⁶⁴ Despite his own financial problems, he personally contributed 10,000 ducats to the endeavor.⁶⁵ The walls are still there, with one of their bastions bearing the name of the count of Roccas.⁶⁶ During the Ottoman invasion, the count played a central role in the defense of Cyprus, as chief commander of the military forces in the island's capital. Although there are different views on the military talent which he displayed during those difficult days, from our point of view it is more important to point out that he, his brothers (including Tommaso Synglitico, viscount of Nicosia), and nephews were killed while defending Venetian Cyprus against the Ottomans.⁶⁷ Thus, the military commander of Nicosia at that critical moment was a Cypriot, scion of a bourgeois Greek family which had succeeded in joining the nobility sometime during the fourteenth or fifteenth century and in climbing to the apex of colonial society under Venice.

This attachment to Venice also resulted in the continuation of the family on Venetian soil after the fall of Cyprus. Zacho, the count's son, born from his Trevisan wife, lived in Treviso in 1579.⁶⁸ Catharina Synglitico, the count's sister and widow of Piero de la Grida, after having been liberated from Turkish captivity, was in Venice in 1584, trying to recuperate the rest of her dowry.⁶⁹ The names of Antonio and Alessandro Synglitico appear in Venetian insurance transactions during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁷⁰ Alessandro Synglitico (the same?) was *sindaco* of the University of Padua in 1591. In the early seventeenth century he held chairs of canon and civil law at the same university, and from 1632 he also directed the civic library of that town.⁷¹

Let us now turn very briefly to the cultural aspects of this family history. Unlike sev-

⁶⁴In a letter of 24 August 1567, he reports the collection of 60,000 ducats, in addition to 5,000 ducats more destined as compensation to the inhabitants of houses that had to be demolished: ASV, Capi X, Lettere, busta 290, no. 249.

⁶⁵Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, III, 846, n. 1; 848, n. 3.

⁶⁶K. K. Keshishian, *Nicosia: Capital of Cyprus Then and Now* (Nicosia, 1978), map facing p. 80.

⁶⁷ASV, Collegio, Relazioni, busta 84 (Relazione venuta da Costantinopoli, 18 April 1571); Du Cange, *Les familles d'Outre-mer*, 314; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, III, 900 and n. 2, 973, 981 and n. 1. Calepio, a contemporary writer who was present in Nicosia during the siege, mentions two family members who survived the fall of Nicosia: Pietro Paolo Synglitico, who had been sent from Nicosia to enroll fighters in the mountains, and Giovanni (Iehan) Synglitico, who headed a group of Cypriots, including peasants, who harassed the invading Ottoman forces in the Paphos area. Calepio claims that both of them surrendered to the Ottomans after Nicosia's fall; yet, Giovanni Synglitico is also included in Calepio's list of Cypriots who died during the war, and he is not listed by the same author among those who regained their freedom under the Turks: Angelo Calepio, "Vera et fidelissima narratione del successo dell'espugnatione et defensione del Regno de Cipro," in Lusignan, *Chorografia*, 95b–96, and the French version, "La Vraye et très fidèle narration du succès des assaults, defenses et prinse du Royaume de Chypre" etc., in Lusignan, *Description de toute l'isle de Cypre*, 262v–263r. See also the English translation, based on the Italian version, in C. D. Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria* (Nicosia, 1969), 122–48, esp. 141; for the above-mentioned lists, see Calepio in Lusignan's *Chorografia*, 110v–11, in his *Description*, 269v–70, and in Cobham, *Excerpta*, 146. For a more general discussion of this matter, see B. Arbel, "Η Κύπρος υπό Ενετική κυριαρχία," in *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, III, forthcoming from the Makarios III Foundation (Nicosia). For a genealogical résumé of the Synglitico family, see S. di Lusignano, *Histoire contenant une sommaire description des généalogies, alliances et gestes de tous les princes et grans seigneurs* etc. (Paris, 1579), 41v–42v.

⁶⁸Du Cange, *Les familles d'Outre-mer*, 314.

⁶⁹ASV, Senato Terra, filza 91.

⁷⁰A. Tenenti, *Naufraiges, corsaires et assurance maritimes à Venise, 1592–1609* (Paris, 1959), name index *ad vocem* Singlitico.

⁷¹G. Fabris, "Professori e scolari greci all'università di Padova," *AVen* 30 (1942), 145.

eral other families of the Cypriot nobility, whose cultural identity has been subject to speculation,⁷² the Greek origin and culture of the Synglitico family is beyond any doubt. In 1536, Zegno (I) Synglitico still had some difficulty expressing himself in Italian, and he had therefore to be assisted by a procurator in stipulating the marriage contract of his granddaughter.⁷³ Another family member, Antonio, who was a nephew of Count Zegno (I), was elected in 1544 as Greek bishop of Famagusta.⁷⁴ The bishop's brother, Franzin, who came under the suspicion of the Roman Inquisition, claimed in 1550 that all his ancestors were Greek, and that he himself never belonged to the Roman church, and was therefore not subject to the Holy Office's jurisdiction.⁷⁵ In his testament, stipulated in Venice in 1570, Zegno (II) Synglitico left 500 ducats for the dowries of needy girls in Cyprus. In addition to two lay commissioners, Zegno insisted that the Greek bishop of Nicosia should also be involved in the selection of candidates.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, there are a few indications that some family members had undergone latinization, or at least found a *modus vivendi* combining their Greek identity with devotion to the dominant Venetian culture, which was naturally Catholic. The marriage of family members to Latin, and especially Venetian families is probably not the strongest indication of the weakening of Greek identity, but it can definitely be considered as an expression of attachment, or at least of the lack of animosity toward Venice. On the other hand, nomination of family members to ecclesiastical benefices of the Roman church, as in the cases of Audeth and Perrin Synglitico, who were nominated respectively as canons of Famagusta and Nicosia in 1473 and 1474, is certainly of greater significance.⁷⁷ In his aforementioned last testament, Zegno (II) Synglitico commanded his three-year-old child (born in 1567 of his second wife, Cara Bressa) to the care of his sister and his Venetian brother-in-law, demanding that from the age of five and until he reached fifteen years of age he should be under the tutelage of his godfather Hieronimo Surian, another Venetian patrician, who lived in Padua. Zegno demanded that his son should be educated "by persons who should be Catholic and pious, and Venetian subjects, who have affection and loyalty to this Serene Dominion, so that being educated in this manner he would be worthy of the grace of her Serenity, as, by the grace of God, my ancestors and myself were known to be; this, I wish, should be the principal respect and care they should have."⁷⁸ If it is still uncertain whether Zegno himself became a Catholic, there are no doubts as to his preferences for his son.

⁷² See, for instance, L. de Mas Latrie, *Histoire des archevêques latins de l'île de Chypre* (Genoa, 1882), 89; W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, "L'héraldique de Chypre," *Cahiers d'héraldique* 3 (1977), 121 (the Gonem family as latinized Greeks); C. Kyrris, "The Noble Family of Logaras of Lapethos, Cyprus: Some New Information about Their Careers, Activities and Landed Properties" *RSBN*, n.s., 4 (1967), 116, n. 3; Rudt de Collenberg, "Etude de prosopographie," 648, 658; idem, "Recherches sur quelques familles chypriotes apparentées au pape Clement VIII Aldobrandini (1592–1605)," *Ἑπετηρίς* 12 (1983), 9–11 (the Flatro and Mistachiel families). Cf. Arbel, "The Cypriot Nobility," 181.

⁷³ ASV, Avogaria di comun, reg. 143/4, fol. 70v: "per non saper cusi ben scriver in nostra lingua el dicto Magnifico miser Zegno."

⁷⁴ ASV, Senato Mar, reg. 27, fol. 138. In the Senate's confirmation of the election, it was stated that Antonio mastered both the Greek and the Italian languages ("peritissimo d'una et l'altra lingua").

⁷⁵ ASV, Sant'ufficio, Processi, busta 10.

⁷⁶ Maltezou, "Νέαι εἰδήσεις," 243.

⁷⁷ Rudt de Collenberg, "Etude de prosopographie," 667.

⁷⁸ Maltezou, "Νέαι εἰδήσεις," 242: "farlo educare e creare da persone catolici e religiosi et che sieno suditte et che portino affettioni et obdligo [*sic*] a questo Serenissimo Dominio" etc.

The spectacular success of some members of the Synglitico family should not lead us to the erroneous impression that here we are dealing with an exceptional case. The social, economic, political, and cultural patterns which have repeated themselves in the three generations which are at the center of our discussion were in fact typical of the Cypriot nobility as a whole.⁷⁹ The small group of Greek noblemen, to which the Synglitico family belonged, conformed to the same general patterns, with the addition of some particular traits related to their Greek identity. In the framework of this paper we can only briefly mention examples of other Greek-Cypriot individuals or families involved in similar activities: Jano (Jacopo) Podocataro served as viscount of Nicosia in 1503, and again in 1507;⁸⁰ Pietro Podocataro occupied the same office in 1508 and in 1510;⁸¹ Hieronimo Boustron was viscount between 1548–50 and again in 1559;⁸² Livio Podocataro filled the same office in 1560.⁸³ Among the holders of landed estates we encounter the names Capadoca, Podocataro, Sozomeno, Contestefano, Boustron, and Paleologo.⁸⁴ Among the tax-farmers, we find names such as Boustron and Sozomeno.⁸⁵ Among the members of the Cypriot nobility, mostly women, who were married to Venetian patricians we encounter again the names Podocataro, Contestefano, Sozomeno, and Boustron.⁸⁶ Among the defenders of Venetian Cyprus against the invading Ottomans were members of the Podocataro, Lascari, Paleologo, and Sozomeno families.⁸⁷ And among the Cypriot survivors who lived in Venetian territories after the fall of Cyprus we also find the names Sozomeno and Podocataro.⁸⁸

An analogous trend can be observed regarding the leaning toward the Latin culture. Noblemen of Greek descent transformed churches on their estates from Oriental to Latin rite.⁸⁹ Greek-Cypriot noblemen were clergymen of the Latin church—the most prominent being the two Latin archbishops of Nicosia, Livio and Cesare Podocataro.⁹⁰ The

⁷⁹Arbel, “Η Κύπρος” (see above, note 67).

⁸⁰ASV, X, Misti, filza 25, no. 19; Sanuto, *I diarii*, IV, col. 867; ASV, X, Misti, filza 20, fol. 101.

⁸¹Sanuto, *I diarii*, IV, col. 667; ASV, X, Misti, filza 25, no. 219.

⁸²ASV, Senato Mar, filza 6; *ibid.*, reg. 30, fols. 69r–69v; *ibid.*, filza 7.

⁸³*Ibid.*, filza 24.

⁸⁴Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 498–501.

⁸⁵ASV, X, Lettere, busta 290, nos. 24–25 (1550, Jotin Bustron); *ibid.*, nos. 214–215 (1565, Zuane Sozomeno).

⁸⁶A daughter of the Podocataro family married in 1521 Federico di Marco Molin; a daughter of Zacco Contestefano married in 1541 Cosmo di Agostin Pasqualigo; a daughter of the Sozomeno family married in 1542 Bortolomeo di Luca Pesaro; a daughter of Hercule Podocataro married in 1544 Andrea di Bortolomeo Pesaro; an illegitimate daughter of Archbishop Cesare Podocataro married in 1556 Antonio di Salvatore Michiel; Zuan Bustron probably married in 1560 a daughter of Iseppo Barbaro; an illegitimate son of Prospero Podocataro married in 1561 a daughter of Marcantonio Zorzi. This information was gathered from Barbaro, *Libro di nozze*, *passim*, and from ASV, Avogaria di comun, reg. 108/1.

⁸⁷Calepio in Cobham, *Excerpta*, 146; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, III, 846 n, 951, 954, 970, 985 n, 1004 n, 1111.

⁸⁸Giovanni Sozomeno and Alessandro Podocataro are authors of two narrations of the war of Cyprus: G. Sozomeno, *Narratione della guerra di Nicosia* (Bologna, 1571) (English translation in Cobham, *Excerpta*, 81–87), and A. Podocataro, *Relatione de' successi di Famagosta dell'anno 1571* (Venice, 1876); Giovanni Sozomeno (the same?) was a member of the Venetian College of Physicians in 1591: R. Palmer, *The Studio of Venice and Its Graduates in the Sixteenth Century* (Padua, 1983), 183; another Giovanni Sozomeno was custodian of the Marciana Library during 1626–33: M. Zorzi, *La Libreria di San Marco: Libri, lettori, società nella Venezia dei Dogi* (Milano, 1987), 207–12.

⁸⁹A. Mercati, “Documenti pontifici su persone e cose del Mar Egeo dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli,” *OCP* 20 (1954), 123–25.

⁹⁰Mas Latrie, “Histoire des archevêques latins,” 320–24.

reappearance of the same names time and again only reflects the exiguous number of Greek-Cypriot noble families; at any rate, it is not an indication of a Venetian policy favoring this group, as against other components of the Cypriot nobility. The same characteristics are indeed typical of the whole of Cypriot nobility. The degree of success and influence was, of course, different from one case to another, but similar opportunities were open to all of them, and they tended to respond to them in a similar manner.

When Cyprus was integrated into the Venetian imperial system, the above-mentioned processes of social mobility and acculturation were already well under way. During the period of Venetian domination, however, they reached an unprecedented level. The new horizons opened before the Cypriot urban upper classes by virtue of Cyprus' inclusion in the Venetian economic system in an age of economic expansion, and the favorable approach demonstrated by the Venetian authorities, made these changes possible. The favorable trends which have been observed in other parts of the Venetian colonial empire during the same period can also be perceived in Cyprus. The black legend of a Venetian policy of ruthless exploitation in Cyprus, and the claims that Venice was highly suspicious of the Cypriot nobility or that it pursued an anti-Greek policy on the island cannot be substantiated by any reliable evidence. On the contrary, for the Greek magnates of the Synglitico family, and most likely also for other Greek and Latin noblemen in Cyprus, the period of Venetian domination was rather a golden age.

Tel Aviv University